THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) No Sir. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India has not received any proposal from the State Government of Rajasthan for setting up a Rural Technology Centre in Jhalawar District of Rajasthan. Therefore, no budget has been sanctioned for the purpose. The Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee has also not submitted any feasibility report of the project to the Government.

Package to boost biotech sector

3149. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the strategies proposed to boost India's biotech sector;

(b) whether there is a proposal for a Rs. 1,000 crore package aiming at creating 50 centres of excellence across the country;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is a crunch of skilled scientists to take up research and development activities; and

(d) whether there are any special schemes to retain biotech scientists in the country and encourage Indian scientists working overseas to return?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Department of Biotechnology has formulated a Draft National Biotechnology Development Strategy, which is a comprehensive roadmap for addressing cross-cutting issues related to human resource development, infrastructure strengthening, promotion of industry and trade, setting up of biotech parks, regulatory mechanism and public awareness, and an action plan for specific sub-sectors. The strategic action plan will direct the future priorities and activities in different sectors of biotechnology. The Draft Strategy was put on the website of Department of Biotechnology for eliciting views and comments. A large number of responses have been received from students, scientists, industries, research organizations, NGO's etc. and also and general public. In addition, consultation with Industry and NGO's have also been held. The National Biotechnology Development Strategy has been finalized after incorporating the comments/ suggestions received. The Draft Note for approval by cabinet is under inter-ministerial consultation.

(b) The Department of Biotechnology proposes to support Centres of excellence in specific areas of biotechnology in the country, with an objective to enhance the innovation ability of the institutions with well-developed

research programmes in specific areas of biotechnology through flexible support to expand and develop faculty research capability, and enhance research infrastructure. They are intended for institutions with a substantial investment in and commitment to biotechnology research. The number and budget of such centres will depend upont he reciept of suitable proposals and their scientific merit.

(c) No Sir, about 1000 M. Sc./M. Tech. Students in biotechnology are coming out every year out of the post-graduate teaching programmes supported by the Department of Biotechnology . The department is providing 100 junior research fellowships and 100 postdoctoral fellowships every year. There are programmes to upgrade skills of mid-career scientists working in research institutions and universities. The department is continuously trying to improve the skill and knowledge levels for R&D in biotechnology.

(d) The Department of Biotechnology has instituted a number of prestigious awards including innovative young Bioscientist Awards to recognize outstanding contributions of our scientists. The Department has also made provision to train Indian scientists in leading overseas laboratories to upgrade their skills. These incentives are likely to help in retaining scientists in the country as well as the world class R&D facilities available in biotechnology are encouraging Indian scientists working overseas to return.

Cll's Suggestion on Reservation in private sector

t3150. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Confederation of Indian Industries (C.I.I.) have stated that the suggestion to make legal provision for reservation in private sector is undesirable;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the private sector has also stated that if the reservation is imposed, the multinational companies will move towards other countries;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.